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## **Driftwood: a machine-readable transcription**

**Bush-Banks, Olivia Ward, b. 1869**

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**Bush-Banks, Olivia Ward, b. 1869**

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Transcription by double-keyed entry.

November, 1997

Added division heading "DEDICATION" for dedication page.

Yours sincerely Olivia Ward Bush

**Driftwood**

By

OLIVIA WARD BUSH

**DEDICATION**

To the Sacred Memory

of

My Aunt,

Maria Draper,

Who loved me unceasingly, labored untiringly,

Sacrificing willingly for me her own life's

interests this little book

is

Most affectionately dedicated.

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## COMMENTS

I like your book very much, especially the poem Drifting. There is a high spiritual tone about it that is bound to please. "Voices" pleases me also.

Your book should be an inspiration to the women of our race, do not hesitate to quote whatever you may wish from what I say.

Sincerely yours,

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.

July, 1904.

The lines in the poem, "A Tribute to Paul Laurence Dunbar," have much merit in them. I think your command of English in prose is quite remarkable.

Sincerely yours,

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

## INTRODUCTION

I have stood on the shore, and watched the waters surging land-ward, then receding ever in alternate motion. I have seen driftwood strewn along the sand, cast up by the restless waves.

I have heard the merry shouts of children, as they gathered, one by one, bits, for the driftwood fire which has warmed and cheered the lowly dwellings, scattered along shore,

or perchance its gleaming blaze shining far out into the night has led some lone traveller to his home.

I have thought how oft these bits of driftwood are but the poor misshapen remnant of some bark wrecked on its homeward course and still the driftwood fire burns bright and still its warmth and glow cheers up Earth's dreary places.

These verses are but bits of driftwood cast up by the landward-surgings and receding waters of adversity and prosperity, and the author has gathered them with the fond hope that some light shall gleam from these pages far out into the night of human perplexities, and brighten up the homeward way of some discouraged traveller.

OLIVIA WARD BUSH.

## Driftwood

Sung by the strand to the music of the wave.

## MORNING

Bright glows the morn, I pace the shining sands,  
And watch the children, as with eager hands  
They gather driftwood for the evening fire.  
Their merry laughter, ringing loud and clear,  
Resounds like sweetest music to my ear,  
As swift they toil, each with the same desire.

And now their task completed, they depart,  
Each one with beaming face and happy heart,  
They too, will watch the driftwood fire to-night,  
And knowing this, they hasten glad and gay,  
With willing feet, along the homeward way,  
Their precious burdens bearing with delight.

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I watch these little children of the poor,  
Till they have reached each lowly dwelling's door,  
And then, I too my footsteps homeward turn;  
I fancy what a joyous sight 'twill be,  
To see the children sitting in their glee,  
Close by the fire and laugh to see it burn.

## EVENING

From out my open window, I can see  
The rolling waves, as fierce and restlessly,  
They dash against the long, long stretch of shore,  
And in the distance, I can dimly trace,  
Some out-bound vessel having left her place  
Of Harbor, to return perhaps no more.

Within my mind there dwells this lingering thought,  
How oft from ill the greatest good is wrought,  
Perhaps some shattered wreck along the strand,  
Will help to make the fire burn more bright,  
And for some weary traveller to-night,  
'Twill serve the purpose of a guiding hand.

Ah yes, and thus it is with these our lives,  
Some poor misshapen remnant still survives,  
Of what was once a fair and beauteous form,  
And yet some dwelling may be made more bright,  
Some one afar may catch a gleam of light,  
After the fury of the blighting storm.

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## DRIFTING

And now the sun in tinted splendor sank,  
The west was all aglow with crimson light;  
The bay seemed like a sheet of burnished gold,  
Its waters glistened with such radiance bright.

At anchor lay the yachts with snow-white sails,  
Outlined against the glowing, rose-hued sky;  
No ripple stirred the waters' calm repose  
Save when a tiny craft sped lightly by.

Our boat was drifting slowly, gently round,  
To rest secure till evening shadows fell;  
No sound disturbed the stillness of the air,  
Save the soft chiming of the vesper bell.

Yes, drifting, drifting; and I thought that life,  
When nearing death, is like the sunset sky:

And death is but the slow, sure drifting in,  
To rest far more securely, by and by.

Then let me drift along the Bay of time,  
Till my last sun shall set in glowing light;  
Let me cast anchor where no shadows fall,  
Full safely moored within Heaven's harbor bright.

Newport, June 12, 1898.

## Bits

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## Fancies

Mid parted clouds, all silver-edged,  
A gleam of fiery gold,  
A dash of crimson-varied hues,  
The Sunset Story's told.

A mirrored lake 'tween mossy banks,  
A lofty mountain ridge,  
A cottage nestling in the vale  
Seen from a ruined bridge.

A woman longing to discern  
Beyond the gleam of gold  
A rush of memory, a sigh,  
And Life's strange tale is told.

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## Regret

I said a thoughtless word one day,  
A loved one heard and went away;  
I cried: "Forgive me, I was blind;  
I would not wound or be unkind."  
I waited long, but all in vain,

To win my loved one back again.  
Too late, alas! to weep and pray,  
Death came; my loved one passed away.  
Then, what a bitter fate was mine!  
No language could my grief define;  
Ah! deep regret could not unsay  
The thoughtless word I spoke that day.

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## At Sunset

I stood in the doorway at evening,  
And I looked to the hills far away  
Where the sun's last rays seemed to linger,  
Ere they faded in brilliant display.

Yes, lingered in beautiful splendor,  
And the scene was rare to behold,  
A pale blue sky was its back-ground,  
With stretches of pink and gold.

What wonder that Nature's rare beauty  
So inspires the soul and thrills  
Our beings with tender emotions,  
As we look far away to the hills!

To the "hills" of which "David" has spoken,  
"From whence comes my help," said he,  
And we have the same blest assurance,  
As we gaze on their majesty.

And we think of the Power who formed them,  
They seem like a tower of defence  
To protect and to ward off the evil  
Until we depart and go hence;

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Where the sunlight fades not, but lingers,  
And to-night my waiting soul thrills  
As I stand in the doorway at sunset,  
As I look far away to the hills.

## Misjudged

Beneath Misfortune's dark and heavy cloud,  
My heart sore wounded, unsubmitive bowed,  
Hope after hope within me paled and died,  
Until indifference and sullen pride  
Usurped my nature's usual warmth and glow  
And made Ambition's fire burn dim and low;  
And then the world, in worldly wisdom said,  
T'were better far that such a life be dead,  
Than living thus, so selfish cold and drear,  
Ambitionless, devoid of warmth and cheer.  
And yet this comfort still remained for me;  
The Finite differs from Infinity,  
God understands, so I indeed am blest,  
He knows it all/ and knowing, judges best.

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## Overlooked

I turned the pages of my book,  
With nervous haste and heedless care,  
I searched impatiently to find  
Some favorite verses written there.  
At last upon the book's first page  
I found the lines for which I sought,  
But in my haste, had overlooked  
And suddenly there came this thought,  
How oft for some much-needed thing  
We ask the Father o'er and o'er,  
When, Lo! by simple faith and trust  
We find the blessing at our door.

## Inspiration

Within my soul, like flames of living fire,  
I feel the burning heat of strong desire  
And, speeding like full many an arrow's dart,



Thought after thought swift courses through my heart,  
I seize my pen with eager fond delight,  
Breathe on, sweet Muse of song, that I may write.

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## Voices

I stand upon the haunted plain  
Of vanished day and year,  
And ever o'er its gloomy waste  
Some strange, sad voice I hear.  
Some voice from out the shadowed Past;  
And one I call Regret,  
And one I know is Misspent Hours,  
Whose memory lingers yet.

Then Failure speaks in bitter tones,  
And Grief, with all its woes;  
Remorse, whose deep and cruel stings  
My painful thoughts disclose.  
Thus do these voices speak to me,  
And flit like shadows past;  
My spirit falters in despair,  
And tears flow thick and fast.

But when, within the wide domain  
Of Future Day and Year  
I stand, and o'er its sunlit Plain  
A sweeter word I hear,  
Which bids me leave the darkened Past  
And crush its memory,--  
I'll hasten to obey the Voice  
Of Opportunity.

## The Tide Surges

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## Heart-Throbs

We suffer and ye know it not,  
Nor yet can ever know,

What depth of bitterness is ours,  
Or why we suffer so;--

If we would know what anguish is,  
Ask of the dark-skinned race,  
Ask of him who loves to know  
The color of his face.

Then plead as he has often plead  
For manhood among men,  
And feel the pain of rights denied;  
Thou canst not know till then.

Or share with him for one brief space,  
Ambition's fond desire,  
Reach out, and strive, as he has striven,  
And aim for something higher.

Let knowledge cultivate, refine,  
Let culture feed the mind,  
Then fondly dream of hopes fulfilled,  
And dreaming wake to find;--

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That merit worth or patient toil  
Does not suffice to win.  
Then learn the cause of this defeat,  
The color of the skin.

The mother of the dusky babe,  
Surveys with aching heart  
Bright prospects, knowing all the while,  
Her off-spring shares no part.

The child attains to manhood's years,  
Still conscious of the same,  
While others boast of life's success,  
He knows it but in name.

Yes, aim, reach out, aspire and strive  
And know, "Twere all in vain,  
And e'en in Freedom's name appeal,  
Then ye can sense our pain.

We suffer and ye know it not,  
Nor yet can ever know,

What depth of bitterness is ours,  
Or why we suffer so.

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## The Nation's Evil

A sound is heard throughout our land,  
A moaning, yearning, pleading cry;  
"O mighty Arm of Right stretch forth,  
Crush out our hopeless misery.  
I see a weary dark-skinned race  
Bend low beneath Oppression's weight,  
I hear their off-spring wailing out,  
O, "Save us from our father's fate!"

I see a fierce, blood-thirsty mob,  
Add torture to a quivering frame.  
I hear an agonizing cry  
Hushed by the cruel fiery flame.  
I see the home left desolate,  
I see a father forced to die,  
I hear a mother's anguished groan,  
I hear their children's piteous cry.

How long I ask shall these things be?  
How long shall men have hearts of stone?  
My soul grown sick and faint within,  
Cries out in supplicating tone,  
"Great God, send forth thy swift demand,  
Declare this evil shall not be,  
That man give justice unto man,  
And cease this inhumanity."

## Lights Along Shore

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## Abraham Lincoln

Like some gigantic, lofty forest tree,  
Shorn of its leafy garment in the storm,

With roots secure deep-fastened in the earth,  
Where naught can rob it of its noble form,  
So stood this man, strong in his sense of right,  
Who faltered not, whose courage never failed,  
Within the Nation's heart, his image stands  
For aye;--because o'er Wrong he had prevailed.

More than a friend, or brother, then was he,  
In very truth, a Martyr for the Cause,  
Unflinching in his zeal-opposing wrong,  
Defending bravely God's own Righteous laws.  
For, out of hard almost unyielding rock,  
Did he not hew a passage for our way?  
Did he not cause the darkness to disperse,  
Did we not see the dawning of the day?

Live ever in our memories, great soul.  
Tho' passed beyond the pale of human sense,  
Thy work well done, hath found its just reward,  
Divine approval is thy recompense.

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## Federic Douglass

We would render fitting tribute,  
We would add to thy great fame,  
We would crown thee with due honor  
And immortalize thy name.

Till Life's evening closed around thee,  
Thy great love remained the same,  
Then from out the Land of Spirits  
Silently the summons came.

In the greatness of thy manhood,  
We can see thee even now,  
Stamped upon our hearts thy image,  
Silver hair and noble brow.

"Grand old Statesman," Thou wast loyal  
To thy country and her cause,  
By the right of such devotion,  
Thou hast won our just applause.

Orator of noblest order,  
Thine the power to declare,  
Thrilling Theme, in tones portraying,  
Eloquence, divinely rare.

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Once, in pleading for thy people,  
Who had suffered grievous wrong,  
Words like these, intense with feeling  
Fell upon the list'ning throng.

"Judge us not, O! favored races,  
From the lofty heights of fame,  
Rather measure our progression,  
By the depths from whence we came.

Telling words, O, Great Defender,  
Of a cause so dear to thee,  
Not alone, thy love revealing  
But thy heart's deep loyalty.

Broad and liberal was thy judgment,  
One aim thine Equality  
Caring not for creed or color,  
Man was man alike to thee.

If beyond this mortal striving,  
Man may reach a higher plain,  
Thou wilt see Life's aim completed,  
And to greatest heights attain.

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## **Carnep, The Brave Standard Bearer**

'Twas a time of fiercest conflict,  
Enmity and awful woe,  
'Twist the North, the friend of Freedom,  
And the South, its bitter foe.

Day by day, the roar of battle

Sounded forth its deathlike knell,  
Day by day the best and bravest  
Died, amid the shot and shell.

Foremost in the ranks of warriors,  
Our black heroes took their place,  
With the lines of fearless courage,  
Stamped upon each dusky face.

We recall with pride, the story  
Of the gallant Fifty-fourth,  
Fighting on the field at Wagner,  
With the brave ones of the North.

There the dauntless William Carney,  
In the Union's sacred name,  
Held aloft the flying colors,  
Won a never-dying fame.

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He was first to plant the standard,  
On the fort he raised it high,  
And he watched the floating banner,  
With a patriot's jealous eye.

Mid retreat and dire confusion,  
Oh! not once did he forget;  
But he snatched the royal emblem  
From the lofty parapet.

On his knees he bravely followed,  
With one hand pressed to his side,  
While the other, held the colors,  
Borne with patriotic pride.

What a cheer went up for Carney,  
As he held the colors high,  
While a soldier's admiration,  
Beamed in every comrade's eye.

"Boys! I have but done my duty,"  
Carney said to those around,  
"I have brought the old flag safely,  
And it never touched the ground."

'Twas a deed both brave and noble,

And the loyal patriot's name,  
Lives to-day and will forever,  
In our memories remain.

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We can ne'er forget this hero,  
Or the gallant Fifty-Fourth,  
Fighting on the field at Wagner,  
With the brave ones of the North.

## Unchained 1863

O'er the land, a hush had fallen,  
Hearts Thrilled expectantly,  
Till from twice two million voices,  
Rang the glad cry, "We are free!"  
Then the whole world caught the echo,  
"We are free! Yes! We are free!"

What a dawning from the midnight!  
What a day of jubilee!  
Twas the New Year's song of triumph,  
That they sang so joyously,  
Till it echoed and re-echoed  
"We are free! Yes! We are free!"

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From the voice of one brave woman,  
Who, in human sympathy,  
With a pen of love and pity  
Wrote the wrongs of slavery,  
Came the glad new cry of triumph,  
"They are free! Yes! They are free!"

And the freedmen, still rejoicing,  
Sang of John Brown's victory,  
Sang of Lincoln's Proclamation,  
Saying, "These have made us free."  
Sumner, Garrison, and Phillips,  
All too fought to make us free.

Then the joyous song grew louder,  
By that price of loyalty,  
Paid by us with our best lifeblood,  
We attest that we are free!  
On the battle-field with honor,  
Our own blood has made us free."

Free indeed, but free to struggle,  
Free to toil unceasingly,  
Naught of wealth, naught of possession,  
Was their portion, e'en tho' free;  
But they faltered not, they failed not,  
Saying ever, "We are free!"

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For their rightful place contending,  
They foresaw their destiny,  
And they pleaded, never ceasing,  
"Give us opportunity!"  
"Give us justice, recognition,  
'Tis our right! for we are free!"

From the lips of Frederic Douglass,  
Came these words of loyalty,  
"Judge not harshly these my people,  
This is but their infancy,  
From the depths they have ascended,  
Give them rights, for they are free!"

After years of ceaseless striving,  
Struggling for the mastery,  
Over self and ill conditions,  
Still they're singing, "We are free!"  
By the virtue of our struggle,  
We shall reap our destiny.

Though we suffer, in our freedom,  
By the hand of cruelty,  
In the lawlessness of Evil,  
God is just, and we are free;  
Life and love, not woe or slaughter,  
Are the birthright of the free.

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When by prejudice untrammelled,  
Rich in manly liberty,  
We receive that recognition  
Rightly given to the free,  
Then the whole world shall proclaim it,  
"Free indeed! Yes! Ye are free!"

## A Hero of San Juan Hill

Among the sick and wounded ones,  
This stricken soldier-boy lay  
With glassy eye and shortened breath,  
His life seemed slipping fast away.

My heart grew faint to see him thus,  
His dark brown face so full of pain,  
I wondered if the mother's eyes  
Were looking for her boy in vain.

I bent to catch his feeble words;  
"I am so ill, and far from home,  
I feel so strange and lonely here,  
You seem a friend, I'm glad you've come."

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"I want to tell you how our boys  
Went charging on the enemy,  
'Twas when we climbed up San Juan's Hill  
And there we got the victory."

"The Spaniards poured a heavy fire,  
We met it with a right good-will,  
We saw the 71st fall back,  
And then our boys went up the hill."

"Yes up the hill, and gained it too,  
Not one brave boy was seen to lag;  
Old Glory o'er us floating free,  
We'd gladly died for that old flag."

His dim eye brightened as he spoke,  
He seemed unconscious of his pain,

In fancy on the battle-field,  
He lived that victory o'er again.

And I, I seemed to grasp it too,  
The stalwart form, the dusky face,  
Of each black hero climbing up,  
To win fair glory for their race.

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The Spaniards said, "That phalanx seemed  
To move like one black solid wall."  
They flung defiance back at death,  
To answer to their country's call.

They fought for Cuban liberty,  
Up San Juan Hill they fought their way,  
Until their life-blood freely spent,  
Marked how these heroes won the day.

March on dark sons of Afric's race,  
Naught can be gained by standing still,  
Retreat not, quit yourselves like men,  
And like these heroes, climb the hill.

Till pride and prejudice shall cease,  
Till racial barriers are unknown,  
Attain the heights, and thou shalt find,  
Equality upon the Throne.

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## Wendell Phillips

A mighty tempest swept the Nation's course  
And strong men sank beneath the ruthless blast  
And feared to rise amid the wreck and ruin  
Of Slave-bound misery and woe,  
Nor dared to rally to the Call of Right,  
Yet still despising the ignoble reign  
Of Serfdom and its pitiless design  
Upon man's helpless brother-man.

O, direful was the need in that sad hour  
And blessed was the sound of that rare voice  
Of those strong words of challenge and demand  
To save a Nation from itself.  
Full willingly this tender sapling bowed,  
Yet did not break beneath the weight of scorn,  
Beneath the hatred of his fellow-man  
Nor would not hold his peace.

How mightily he rose amid the ruin,  
Amid the blighting blast of Slavery's power,  
And wrought, full hopeful of the righteous end,  
Until the souls of men revived  
And caught a vision of the better way,  
The nobler standard of a Nation's might,  
The consciousness of human brotherhood,  
The priceless boon of liberty.

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O, heart of love! thine was the fine desire  
To aid thy helpless brother in his need,  
To teach thy kind the error and the shame  
Of holding back another's right.  
May we, whose chafing fetters were unbound  
By thine outspoken word of strong defence,  
Keep burning on the altar of our souls  
The incense of thy sacrifice.

## The Moaning of The Tide

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## To the Memory of Paul Lawrence Dunbar

Dunbar is dead! O Grief, thy cloud of gloom  
Hangs o'er his race! They sorely needed him,  
That he should pass from them in his bright bloom  
Hath sorrowed deep; and troubled eyes are dim  
With tears. To hear no more the voice that thrilled;  
To know his pen lies useless, undisturbed;

To know that evermore his songs are stilled,  
Hath filled their hearts with mournings, yet unheard.  
O Singer-Artist, thy sweet tuneful lays  
Shall live, e'en though thy spirit swift hath flown  
Back to its Maker; still we prize and praise  
The picture that thy skillful hand has thrown  
Upon Life's canvass, that so well portrays  
The lot of him who close to Nature clings;  
The joy, the pain, the pleasure of his days  
In field and cabin, where he weeps or sings;  
It must be that thy soul-inspired Art  
Hath found, at last, in a diviner sphere  
Its proper place, from earthly ills apart,  
To make complete its rare beginning here.

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## To the Memory of William Lloyd Garrison

The Autumn leaves, rich golden-tinted leaves,  
Have fallen, and all barren lie the fields,  
For, t'is the Reaping-time, when full-grown sheaves  
Are gathered in, and kindly Nature yields  
Her choicest gifts, while Nature's children share  
The Autumn Glory, flooding vale and hill,  
And thus the man, with life so full, so rare,  
Ripe, in his Autumn time, sleeps calm and still.

How fearlessly, how fervently he wrought!  
While from his lips fell truth like scattered grain,  
Enriching all the field of human thought,  
Restoring faith to human hearts again.

Now, o'er our memories the mellow glow,  
Of all his love, of all his words and deeds  
Shines brightly, and t'is ours to feel and know  
That he who pled our cause, who knew our needs  
Has left with us the golden-tinted leaves  
Of hope, such hope as made his life complete,  
That we, like him may bring our Autumn sheaves,  
And lay them at the Master-Reaper's feet.

## The Brightening of the Hearth-Side

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## The Yule-Tide Song A Christmas Legend

Away in the mystical land of the Orient, there lived an ancient people who worshipped the Gift of Song, and they also believed that certain souls were chosen to minister to humanity through its power, but, first of all, such souls must have passed through so much of human sorrow, until it glorified their countenance, and none but the Infinite One could read the mystery of that Glory.

At every Yule-tide season, it was their special mission to go forth among the people, even across the great waters, and to wait until the inspiration came upon them, and, wherever they might be, the song would find its way into the hearts of those who were hesitating or faltering in their duty toward their fellowmen, and the words of the song would be sweetly strange to its hearers, but the beauty of its music would be unlike that of any earthly strain, and its force would be so compelling that man would clearly see his path of duty. Then the Singer, his mission accomplished,

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would depart silently from among them, until another Yule tide should lead him forth once more.

It was the Christmas-tide, and the heart of the great American city was beating and throbbing with restless eagerness, as the people hurried to and fro, each, in his own way, preparing for the morrow, the Sacred Day when Heaven's princely Gift, the Christ-Child, was offered human-kind.

The lights of the city gleamed and flashed, revealing too often the sight of misery, as weary, disheartened men, women and half-fed children of the poor, sought shelter from the chilling winds of the night.

From a small, low building, on one of the streets of that city where the endless row of ill-assorted tenement houses told of want and suffering, came the sound of mingled voices, and, a stranger, in passing, paused for a moment to listen, at the same time, catching sight of the word "Welcome" over its narrow doorway.

Unhesitatingly, he entered quietly, and seated himself among a mixed company of men, women and children.

The people gathered there represented that part of humanity who were too poor even to offer the simplest gifts, one to the other, but they had gathered there to hear the comforting words of the silvery-haired

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woman as she told the story of the Christ child and longing, love, and pity, to these poor children of men.

The stranger sat entranced, unmindful of the covert glances of those around him.

It was small wonder that they sought to view him closely, for the expression of his bronze, foreign face, so peaceful in its repose, yet so striking in its clear-cut outlines, seemed to weave around them a spell of enchantment from which they were powerless to withdraw.

Across the aisle from him, sat a young girl of eighteen years, and beside her, a little child looking up into her face, pleading to be taken home with her, for this child's mother and father had passed into the Land of Silence, and their little one knew not where to lay its head.

The girl sat struggling within herself. Should she take this homeless child to her meager abode, when she herself could barely live on the small pittance she received from her daily toil? No she could not. Again the little face looked up into hers, and again she struggled within herself. The child was homeless, friendless. O, what could she do when she herself was so bereft of daily needs!

Behind her sat a woman who had drunk from the cup of disappointment and sorrow. These had over-shadowed

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her life, and she questioned. What have I to offer others, when my own soul knows no peace?

The silvery-haired woman had ceased speaking, and drawn by the eager face of the stranger, she courteously addressed him, saying, "Friend, our strangers are always welcome among us. Have you a word of Yule-tide cheer?" And the stranger, rising and moving gracefully forward, answered in tones that thrilled the people into perfect silence, "Nay, I cannot find the word that I would speak, though much I thank you for this kindness to an unknown guest, but, there is a power within me that bids me give to you freely of that for which I came, but I must wait in silence until I shall be bidden to fulfill my mission." He ceased speaking, and stood with uplifted eyes, as if in quest of a divine commission. The people sat in awed silence, never had they seen a face like unto his before! Who was this

mysterious stranger, and why stood he thus in this silence, that they could not comprehend?

The woman who had tasted the cup of human sorrow leaned forward and quietly whispered to the girl of eighteen years, "He is inspired, and I feel that when the moment comes, he will give to us his message."

Suddenly, as if in answer to her waiting, the singer

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broke forth into the sweetest song that man could ever hear, and, the words, although unknown to them, were fraught with strange sweet meaning to their waiting souls, and somehow, they knew he sang of love divine, man's service unto man, of duty, seen and lovingly performed, of sacrifice, and best of all, the final benediction of Heaven's unbroken peace.

O, the strains of music were passing sweet, unlike that of any earthly strain, and as they looked upon the Singer, they saw his face was glorified with a halo, not of earth. Sweetly the marvellous Song died away, and moving silently forward, the Singer passed out into the night, they knew not whither.

But the song had filled its mission. The silvery-haired woman bowed her head in humble gratitude for the blessings of the hour.

Over the soul of the woman who had tasted human sorrow, came a great wave of peace, and the girl of eighteen years, ceased her struggling, and clasping close to her breast, the friendless child, hurried homeward through the night.

The Gift of Song worshipped by those Ancient People had indeed come to them. The Singer had vanished and according to the beautiful legend, whether or not he came from, or had returned to the Land of the Orient, we know not, we cannot say, we only know that the Singer and the Song had filled their Yule-tide Mission.

## **The Burning Logs of Memory**

57

## **Be Faithful**

At the gate of the dear old homestead,  
With hands clasped in lingering farewell,  
We stood together in silence,

With feelings no language could tell,  
As I looked in the face before me,  
With its crown of silver gray hair,  
I could see 'neath the lines of sorrow,  
The image of Christ printed there.

Just a moment before, in her dwelling,  
We had knelt together in prayer,  
We had felt the peace of His presence,  
And we knew that the Saviour was there,  
And now came the moment of parting,  
Standing there at the quaint rustic gate,  
And somehow we felt but one impulse,  
And that was to linger and wait,

For our hearts were too full for expression,  
So we looked at each other and smiled,  
And she with a voice firm, yet tender,  
Said, "Be faithful, be faithful my child,  
Remember the dear mother sleeping,  
In the churchyard there by the road,  
Oh, remember she gave you her blessing,  
E're she entered her final abode."

58

Oh, remember she pled with the Father,  
To keep you, her child in His care,  
And to bring you at least to His Kingdom,  
And she would be waiting there.  
And He will my dear if you're faithful,  
And then with a tear in her eye,  
She whispered once more, "Oh, be faithful,"  
God bless you my child, now, "Good-bye."

Good-bye! I could scarcely repeat it,  
As I slowly turned from the place,  
And I cast a longing glance backward,  
For a glimpse of the dear old face  
And there she was standing, still smiling,  
And waving her dear withered hand,  
While I in return smiled bravely,  
With emotions I scarce could command.

Then I turned and lingered a moment,  
At the churchyard there by the road,  
And I thought of the dear Sainted mother,  
Resting now at home with her God  
Beyond lay the broad sparkling river,



Clear as crystal its bright waters shone,  
And I thought of another we read of,  
Winding its way by God's Throne.

59

Then I hastened once more on my journey,  
Out into the world with its care,  
Out into the world's temptations,  
Which I knew were waiting me there.  
But somehow new strength seemed given,  
To battle and strive against sin,  
And somehow I felt I should conquer,  
And at last the victory win.

Be faithful, I hear the words ringing,  
With sweetness, down, down through the years,  
Giving hope in my hours of darkness,  
Dispelling my doubts and my fears.  
Oft in fancy I see the dear one,  
As she looked in my face and smiled,  
Oft in fancy I hear her soft whisper,  
Oh, be faithful, be faithful my child.

60

## Palm Branches

In the hush of the Sabbath evening,  
The people were wending their way,  
To worship in God's own temple,  
Where so often, they met to pray.  
They had said like the Psalmist David,  
"Let us go to the House of the Lord,  
We're athirst for the living water,  
And we long to feed on His word."

So they entered His sacred dwelling,  
And they sat in silence there,  
While the man of God bowed humbly,  
And offered a fervent prayer  
That the peace of the Holy Spirit  
Might enter each waiting soul,

That some weary wounded seeker,  
Might believe and be made whole.

And the people's hearts grew tender,  
As they heard the earnest prayer,  
And their souls rejoiced within them,  
For the Comforter was there;  
Then followed the Holy Communion,  
That Ordinance so divine,  
And they ate of the bread, His body,  
And they drank of His blood, the wine.

## 61

'Twas an hour of earnest devotion,  
'Mid the hush and the holy calm,  
Bringing its rest to the weary,  
To the wounded, its healing balm.  
Then a burst of heavenly music,  
Broke over the stillness again,  
And the sweet familiar "Palm Branches,"  
Rang out in triumphant strain.

Louder and louder swelling,  
Till it echoed with richness untold,  
Till it seemed that the Master was coming,  
As he did in the days of old  
When He rode as a king in triumph,  
Through the streets of Jerusalem,  
And they cast their garments before Him,  
And proclaimed Him the "Ruler of Men."

And to-night the people adoring,  
Gave honor to Him above,  
And they brought Him, each one an offering,  
The beautiful palms of love.  
While the rich full strains of music,  
So sweetly their spirits controlled,  
Till it seemed that the Hosts of Heaven,  
Were striking their Harps of gold.

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And bowing in praise before Him,  
Crying, "Holy, thrice Holy our Lord,  
As they stood on the banks of the River,  
Which flows by the bright Throne of God,

And the people waited enraptured,  
For the last faint echo to cease,  
Then arose and passed from His temple,  
And went on their way in peace.

They were glad like the Psalmist David,  
That they went to the House of the Lord,  
They had drank from the Living Waters,  
They had fed on His precious Word,  
In their souls the strain of Palm Branches,  
Seemed to linger and gently abide,  
They remembered with joy its sweetness,  
In the hush of that even-tide.

63

## The Organist's Dream

Yes, I know I am a stranger,  
But when you came in that door,  
I just felt that I could trust you,  
Though we've never met before,  
That white ribbon you are wearing,  
Somehow makes me want to say,  
Something that's been pressing on me,  
It has troubled me all day.

Thanks! I knew that you would listen,  
When I saw your bow of white,  
So I'll just begin and tell you,  
Of a dream I had last night.  
It was strange that I should dream it,,  
For my dreams are very few,  
But this seemed to be so real,  
And I hope it won't come true.

I was in a great tall building,  
Shut up in a dark, dark room,  
And the darkness was so fearful,  
That it seemed like mid-night gloom,  
And I prayed, and begged, and pleaded,  
For some friend to let me out,  
But in vain my cries and pleading,  
I was doomed without a doubt.

64

Then I ceased to call and listen,  
For I heard sweet voices sing,  
And their tones grew loud and louder,  
Till they made the arches ring,  
With these words that they were singing,  
There is no more room in Heaven,  
And to him who strays and wanders,  
Entrance there shall not be given.

Ah! I thought of dear Old England,  
How I've made the organ ring,  
In the old church on the corner,  
How the choir used to sing,  
I have heard the sweetest music,  
I have played the sweetest songs,  
Grand old airs from Hayden Handel,  
Music that has stirred the throngs.

But last night those voices singing,  
"There is no more room in Heaven,  
And to him who strays and wanders,  
Entrance there shall not be given,"  
Made me ask myself the question,  
Is there no more room for me?  
Am I shut outside of Heaven,  
Now and for Eternity?

65

Then I prayed again and pleaded,  
Begged that I might be released,  
But they heeded not my pleading,  
And the voices never ceased.  
Singing, no more room in heaven,  
And I knew I was denied,  
Entrance through the Heavenly Portal,  
I alone was shut outside.

All night long I heard the singing,  
And the words were just the same,  
And to tell the truth about it,  
I was glad when morning came,  
But somehow I can't help thinking,  
That perhaps I'd ought to pray,

For I haven't heard a sermon,  
Or a prayer for many a day.

Though I promised the dear mother  
That I'd go to meeting some,  
But it's been five years and over,  
Since I left the dear old home.  
And I haven't kept my promise,  
But that dream I had last night,  
Makes me feel ashamed and sorry,  
That I haven't done just right.

66

Yes, I know I should be better,  
And I'm really going to try,  
For I've been so wild and reckless,  
That I'm hardly fit to die,  
But you've made me feel more cheerful,  
For your words have been so kind,  
And somehow the burden's lifted,  
That was pressing on my mind.

Well, Good-bye, I'm glad I met you,  
And I'll do just as you say,  
I will write the dear old mother,  
That her boy has learned to pray,  
And although I've strayed and wandered,  
Though I've lived so carelessly,  
I will try to enter Heaven,  
For I know there's room for me.

## **Dreams By The Driftwood Fire**

69

### **A Dream of the New Year**

Through the waning hours and moments,  
Of the slowly dying year,  
I sat watching, watching, waiting,  
For the New Dawn to appear.  
While the Old Year's strife and struggle,  
Like a swiftly flowing stream,

Passed before me till I wearied,  
Fell asleep--asleep to dream.

That I saw a lofty castle,  
Vast in size, and wondrous bright,  
And I stood outside its portals,  
Waiting for the dawning light.  
From its towers the bells were ringing,  
In a strange discordant tone,  
Wailing out their mournful measures,  
Like a mortal's dying moan.

Still I waited, knocked and waited,  
Lingered through the shadowed night,  
For I longed to learn the secret  
Of this castle, vast and bright.  
Till a voice within, cried loudly,  
"Thou shalt have that wish sublime,  
Thou art knocking at Life's castle,  
And the Keeper's name is Time."

70

"And the bells you hear above you,  
Ring out all the dying years,  
Ring out Man's past griefs and sorrows,  
Ring out blasted hopes and fears.  
With the coming of the New Year,  
They will cease their sad refrain,  
You will hear them chiming sweetly,  
Ringing out a joyous strain.

Watch and wait awhile with patience,  
Wait with hope, and not in fear,  
For the New Year swift approaches,  
Its bright dawning draweth near."  
So I waited, watched and waited  
Till the castle's door swung wide,  
And the keeper bade me enter,  
Saying, "Mortal, here abide."

'Twas indeed a wondrous castle,  
With its arches gleaming bright,  
E'en the keeper's face was beaming,  
With a rare and radiant light,  
Through the spacious halls, he led me  
Over floors of spotless white,  
Till it seemed that mortal vision  
Ne'er beheld a fairer sight.

71

On its walls in blazoned letters,  
I could trace each written line,  
And the words were wrought most strangely,  
Words no mortal could define.  
And the keeper softly speaking,  
Read them, one by one to me;  
"Resolution, Faith and Duty,  
Hope and Opportunity."

Then I asked him, "Can you tell me  
Why these written words appear?"  
He replied, "These are the watchwords  
That shall guide thee through the year,  
Just resolve to do thy duty,  
Thine the opportunity,  
Hope shall aid thee, in thy purpose,  
Do it well and faithfully."

Then the bells pealed out so loudly,  
Ringing out their joyous strain  
That I started from my slumbers,  
Found myself alone again.  
Saw no more Life's wondrous castle,  
Vanished now the keeper, Time,  
Heard no more the joyful pealing  
Of the bell's sweet, tuneful chime.

72

Day had dawned, the night was over,  
Life's old year was safely past,  
Now had come a brighter morning,  
Life's New Year had dawned at last.  
But the dream had filled its mission,  
Made my path of duty clear,  
Hope and Faith were now the watchwords,  
Brightening up my glad New Year.

73

## The Plains of Peace

Again my fancy takes its flight,  
And soars away on thoughtful wing,  
Again my soul thrills with delight,  
And this the fancied theme, I sing,  
From Earthly scenes awhile, I find release,  
And dwell upon the restful Plains of Peace.

The Plains of Peace are passing fair,  
Where naught disturbs and naught can harm,  
I find no sorrow, woe or care,  
These all are lost in perfect calm,  
Bright are the joys, and pleasures never cease,  
For those who dwell on the Plains of Peace.

No scorching sun or blighting storm,  
No burning sand or desert drear,  
No fell disease or wasting form,  
To mar the glowing beauty here.  
Decay and ruin ever must decrease,  
Here on the fertile, healthful Plains of Peace.

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What rare companionship I find,  
What hours of social joy I spend,  
What restfulness pervades my mind,  
Communing with congenial friend.  
True happiness seems ever to increase,  
While dwelling here upon the Plains of Peace.

Ambitions too, are realized,  
And that which I have sought on earth,  
I find at last idealized,  
My longings ripen into worth,  
My fondest hopes no longer fear decease,  
But bloom forth brightly on the Plains of Peace.

'Tis by my fancy, yet 'tis true,  
That somewhere having done with Earth,  
We shall another course pursue,  
According to our aim or worth,  
Our souls from mortal things must find release,  
And dwell immortal on the Plains of Peace.



## Her Offering

Lay aside your pen for a moment,  
 And listen, my dear to me,  
 While I tell you a strange, sweet story,  
 The sweetest that ever could be.  
 And perhaps, the theme will inspire you  
 And perhaps you will catch the strain  
 Of sweetness, and maybe you'll write it  
 When you take up your pen again.

So, there in the evening twilight,  
 I gladly laid down my pen  
 And listened to hear her story,  
 As sweet to me now, as then.  
 It was just at the close of daylight,  
 When shadows begin to unfold,  
 I remember the time so clearly,  
 And this was the story she told,--

Last night, my dear, in dreamland,  
 I sat in a princely hall,  
 And its arches were solid marble,  
 Its pillars stately and tall,  
 I saw before me an altar,  
 Exquisitely wrought in gold,  
 And the white-robed priest behind it,  
 Was saying, my people behold,--

To-day is the great passover,  
 Of thanks and of sacrifice,  
 Give ye of your best and purest,  
 The least of these will suffice.  
 Come then with sincerest devotion,  
 Bring all that ye can afford,  
 Oh, who will be first to offer  
 Thanksgiving and praise to the Lord?

Down the aisle of the princely dwelling,  
 Two maidens in spotless white,  
 Came bearing rich treasures of silver,  
 Their faces beaming with light.

And, ascending the steps to the altar,  
They offered their gifts to the Lord,  
They had brought Him the best and the purest.  
The richest each one could afford.

Just behind them in humble submission,  
A woman came, weary and worn,  
With feeble, faltering, foot-steps,  
With garments so faded and torn,  
In her hand she was tenderly bearing,  
Two tiny pieces of bread,  
And, ascending the steps to the altar,  
She bowed, and tremblingly said,--

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"Not a morsel of food have I tasted,  
Since yesterday's early dawn,  
But I've waited, Oh, earnestly waited,  
For the coming of this bright morn,  
This is all that I have to offer,  
This simple gift to the Lord,  
It's the best that I have and the purest.  
The richest that I can afford."

And the white-robed priest said softly,  
"Your gift will indeed suffice,  
In youth you have kept the passover,  
Of thanks and sacrifice."  
And then, as the priest was speaking,  
The scene faded slowly away,  
And the princely hall had vanished.  
I awoke to find it was day.

"So, my dear I have told the story,  
And I hope you have caught the strain,  
Of sweetness,--and now I leave you,  
Good-night, till we meet again."  
And there in the evening twilight,  
I gladly took up my pen,  
And I wrote this strange, sweet story,  
As sweet to me now, as then.

78

## My Dream of Long Ago (TO MY AUNT)

I had a strange sweet dream long, long ago,  
When in my years I yet was but a child,  
And oft since then as I have dreamed it o'er  
Its sweetness has my saddest hours beguiled.

It was that she who like my mother seemed  
And I had travelled far and travelled long,  
Her hand and mine together tightly clasped,  
She with a thoughtful look, and I with song.

And walking thus our way led pleasantly  
Mid winding paths on either side where grew  
Rare flowers, their perfumes wafted on the breeze,  
Which all around us their rich fragrance threw.

But soon our road turned suddenly aside,  
Where rose a height of stony rugged ground,  
No flowers bloomed upon this hilly waste,  
Where sighing winds played mournfully around.

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Below the hills, half-hidden, a tiny path  
Went winding round and out into the road.  
So smoothly did it keep its tiny way  
It seemed a guide that nature had bestowed.

We paused, and she spoke there in tender tones,  
"My child, you take the easy path around,  
For I can better face the windy blast,  
My feet can better tread the stony ground."

And I, who knew no will save hers alone,  
Obeyed, and o'er the tiny pathway sped,  
Oft looking up to see her bravely climb  
The stony height with firm and steady tread.

And now the winds her garments roughly blew,  
But she, unheeding their rude, blighting blast,

Pressed on, and when I from the pathway ran  
We met, and hands again together clasped.

Before us stretched an endless smooth white road  
Which ran beside the fairest verdant field  
That ever mortal eye had looked upon  
Or ever Nature's storehouse had revealed.

80

Above our heads the sun shone brightly now,  
It seemed to thrill our hearts with hope anew  
And shed upon our path a mellow light  
Which all around us a soft radiance threw.

Thus hand in hand we lightly trod along  
This pleasant road with neither curve or bend  
When I awoke to find it all a dream  
And we had never reached our journey's end.

And yet it may be that this very road,  
The end of which we vainly tried to trace,  
Might still have led to pastures far more fair,  
We might have found some peaceful resting place.

## A Floating Spar

83

## Hope

The driftwood fire burns brightly on, but dreamingtime is over. Stern reality sounds its convincing call to the time of our awakening.

Over the troubled waters of our civilization comes a human cry for human rights--a starting echo from the far cry of bondage over half a century ago.

Prejudice, the floating wreckage of chattel slavery, rises ever to the surface of the turbulent waters of a Nation's life, obstructing each best attempt toward a safe course to its highest citizenship.

The clanking chains of racial injustice, that bind and hold fast the infinite longings and fondest ambitions of a human soul, must be broken.

Doors that are closed against him who lives and breathes in this, a free Republic;--who battles for its preservation, who embraces its educational opportunities, who enters its

arena with unswerving purpose to aid in its progressive interests by contributing his own thrift, industry, intellectual and spiritual activities--must be opened.

Had the artist of 50 years ago desired to paint a thrilling picture of human woes, he might have produced upon his canvass this painfully familiar scene

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--the auction-block--the slaver--and the enslaved, and beneath he might have written these words:

"The Barrier to a Nation's Progress."

But, if in the intensity of his soul, the artist of today desires to paint a true picture of the present attitude of the American mind toward a part of its citizenship, he might portray upon his canvass the following scene--an American citizen of darker hue, with manly bearing, standing, with outstretched hands before the closed door of a miniature institution known as "Progressive Civilization," and behind him, a lawless mob. Beneath this he might well write the convincing words:

"Prejudice and Lynch Law--The Curse of the Twentieth Century."

But, happily, amid the wreckage, despite the turbulence, the floating spar of Hope is seen, making its way toward Right and Justice.

Julia Ward Howe beheld it, even through the gleaming camp-fires, when her soul longed for the "glory of the coming of the Lord." She saw its consummation in and through her mighty refrain, "His Cause is Marching On."

85

Harriet Beecher Stowe held fast to the firm support of Hope, in her vivid portrayal of Slavery, as a living dramatic reality, in that masterpiece of human history, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and, it may be that her mantle will fall upon one who knows and feels the heart-throbs of his race, who has tasted the bitterness of the bondage of American freedom and, who will yet write a great American Story, in which he shall tell of the Nation's greatest injustice, the denial of the ballot in the South; he shall also reveal volcanic fires of prejudice in the North, over which we daily tread.

Happily for him, he shall weave into the fabric of his genius, the inherited originalities of his people, the development and power of their musical birthright, and the cheering influence of their native humor.

It may be that the romance of home and social life will add a touch of coloring to his narrative.

But the pathos of his story, and the intensity of his longings will be most deeply felt, when he writes of an unalterable faith in the ultimate triumph of justice and its equalizing power.

Surely then shall the Nation's heart be touched, and the American conscience stirred to higher, nobler impulses.

86

O! floating Spar of Hope  
'Tis ours to cling full fast to thee,  
Outriding e'en the mighty wave,  
And current, strong with black despair,  
Not even these have power to engulf  
Nor stay thine onward course.  
Justice and Right are bearing down upon us,  
Ay, holding out strong hands,  
Of help and timely rescue.  
They lead to that long-looked-for Haven  
Where man at last plays fair with brother-man  
And gives him back his ancient Right. Equality!

## ON THE LONG ISLAND INDIAN

How relentless, how impartial,  
Is the fleeting hand of time,  
By its stroke, great empires vanish  
Nations fall in swift decline.

Once resounding through these forests,  
Rang the warwhoop shrill and clear,  
Once here lived a race of Red Men,  
Savage, crude, but knew no fear.

Here they fought their fiercest battles,  
Here they caused their wars to cease,  
Sitting round their blazing camp fires,  
Here they smoked the Pipe of Peace.

Tall and haughty were the warriors,  
Of this fierce and warlike race.  
Strong and hardy were their women,  
Full of beauteous, healthy grace.

Up and down these woods they hunted,  
Shot their arrows far and near.  
Then in triumph to their wigwams,  
Bore the slain and wounded deer.

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