

***SUSAN
COOLIDGE***



***A FEW
MORE
VERSES***

Susan Coolidge

A Few More Verses

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A BENEDICTION.

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GOD give thee, love, thy heart's desire!
What better can I pray?
For though love falter not, nor tire,
And stand on guard all day,
How little can it know or do,
How little can it say!

How hard it strives, and how in vain,
By hope and fear misled,
To make the pathway soft and plain
For the dear feet to tread,
To shield from sun-beat and from rain
The one beloved head!

Its wisdom is made foolishness;
Its best intent goes wrong;
It curses where it fain would bless,
Is weak instead of strong,—
Marring with sad, discordant sighs
The joyance of its song.

I do not dare to bless or ban,—
I am too blind to see,—
But this one little prayer I can
Put up to God for thee,
Because I know what fair, pure things
Thy inmost wishes be;

That what thy heart desires the most

Is what he loves to grant,—

The love that counteth not its cost

If any crave or want;

The presence of the Holy Ghost,

The soul's inhabitant;

The wider vision of the mind;

The spirit bright with sun;

The temper like a fragrant wind,

Chilling and grieving none;

The quickened heart to know God's will

And on his errands run;

The ministry of little things,—

Not counted mean or small

By that dear alchemy which brings

Some grain of gold from all;

The faith to wait as well as work,

Whatever may befall.

So, sure of thee, and unafraid,

I make my daily prayer,

Nor fear that my blind zeal be made

Thy injury or snare:

God give thee, love, thy heart's desire,

And bless thee everywhere!



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TO ARCITE AT THE WARS. 1759.

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A THOUSAND leagues of wind-blown space,
A thousand leagues of sea,
Half of the great earth's hiding face
Divides mine eyes from thee;
The world is strong, the waves are wide,
But my good-will is stronger still,
My love, than wind or tide.

These sentinels which Fate has set
To bar and hold me here
I make my errand-men, to get
A message to thine ear.
The winds shall waft, the waters bear,
And spite of seas I, when I please,
Can reach thee everywhere.

Prayers are like birds to find the way;
Thoughts have a swifter flight;
And mine stream forth to thee all day,
Nor stop to rest by night.
Like silent angels at thy side
They stand unseen, they bend and lean,
They bless and warn and guide.

There is no near, there is no far,
There is no loss or change,
To love which, like a fixed star,
Abideth in one range,
And shines, and shines, with quenchless eyes,
And sends long rays in many ways
To lighten distant skies.

Where sight is not, faith brighter burns;
So faithfully I wait,
Secure that loyal loving earns
Its guerdon soon or late,—
Secure, though lacking word or sign,
That thy true thought keeps as it ought
Tryst with each thought of mine.

NEW EVERY MORNING.

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EVERY day is a fresh beginning,
Every morn is the world made new.
You who are weary of sorrow and sinning,
Here is a beautiful hope for you,—
A hope for me and a hope for you.

All the past things are past and over;
The tasks are done and the tears are shed.
Yesterday's errors let yesterday cover;
Yesterday's wounds, which smarted and bled,
Are healed with the healing which night has shed.

Yesterday now is a part of forever,
Bound up in a sheaf, which God holds tight,
With glad days, and sad days, and bad days, which never
Shall visit us more with their bloom and their blight,
Their fulness of sunshine or sorrowful night.

Let them go, since we cannot re-live them,
Cannot undo and cannot atone;
God in his mercy receive, forgive them!
Only the new days are our own;
To-day is ours, and to-day alone.

Here are the skies all burnished brightly,

Here is the spent earth all re-born,
Here are the tired limbs springing lightly
To face the sun and to share with the morn
In the chrism of dew and the cool of dawn.

Every day is a fresh beginning;
Listen, my soul, to the glad refrain,
And, spite of old sorrow and older sinning,
And puzzles forecasted and possible pain,
Take heart with the day, and begin again.

LOHENGRIN.

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TO have touched Heaven and failed to enter in!
Ah, Elsa, prone upon the lonely shore,
Watching the swan-wings beat along the blue,
Watching the glimmer of the silver mail,
Like flash of foam, till all are lost to view,—
What may thy sorrow or thy watch avail?
He cometh nevermore.

All gone the new hope of thy yesterday,—
The tender gaze and strong, like dewy fire,
The gracious form with airs of Heaven bedight,
The love that warmed thy being like a sun:—
Thou hadst thy choice of noonday or of night;
Now the swart shadows gather, one by one,
To give thee thy desire!

To every life one heavenly chance befalls;
To every soul a moment, big with fate,
When, grown importunate with need and fear,
It cries for help, and lo! from close at hand,
The voice Celestial answers, "I am here!"
Oh, blessed souls, made wise to understand,
Made bravely glad to wait!

But thou, pale watcher on the lonely shore,

Where the surf thunders, and the foam-bells fly,
Is there no place for penitence and pain,
No saving grace in thy all-piteous rue?
Will the bright vision never come again?
Alas, the swan-wings vanish in the blue,
There cometh no reply!



A SINGLE STITCH.

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ONE stitch dropped as the weaver drove
His nimble shuttle to and fro,
In and out, beneath, above,
Till the pattern seemed to bud and grow
As if the fairies had helping been,—
One small stitch which could scarce be seen.
But the one stitch dropped pulled the next stitch out,
And a weak place grew in the fabric stout;
And the perfect pattern was marred for aye
By the one small stitch that was dropped that day.

One small life in God's great plan,
How futile it seems as the ages roll,
Do what it may, or strive how it can
To alter the sweep of the infinite whole!
A single stitch in an endless web,
A drop in the ocean's flow and ebb!
But the pattern is rent where the stitch is lost,
Or marred where the tangled threads have crossed;
And each life that fails of its true intent
Mars the perfect plan that its Master meant.

REPLY.

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“WHAT, then, is Love?” she said.

Love is a music, blent in curious key
Of jarring discords and of harmony;
'Tis a delicious draught which, as you sip,
Turns sometimes into poison on your lip.
It is a sunny sky infolding storm,
The fire to ruin or the fire to warm;
A garland of fresh roses fair to sight,
Which then becomes a chain and fetters tight.
It is a half-heard secret told to two,
A life-long puzzle or a guiding clew.
The joy of joys, the deepest pain of pain;—
All these Love has been and will be again.

“How may I know?” she said.

Thou mayest *not* know, for Love has conned the art
To blind the reason and befool the heart.
So subtle is he, not himself may guess
Whether he shall be more or shall be less;
Wrapped in a veil of many colored mists,
He flits disguisèd wheresoe'er he lists,
And for the moment is the thing he seems,
The child of vagrant hope and fairy dreams;
Sails like a rainbow bubble on the wind,

Now high, now low, before us or behind;
And only when our fingers grasp the prize,
Changes his form and swiftly vanishes.

“Then best not love,” she said.

Dear child, there is no better and no best;
Love comes not, bides not at thy slight behest.
As well might thy frail fingers seek to stay
The march of waves in yonder land-locked bay,
As stem the surging tide which ebbs and fills
Mid human energies and human wills.
The moon leads on the strong, resisting sea;
And so the moon of love shall beckon thee,
And at her bidding thou wilt leap and rise,
And follow o’er strange seas, ’neath unknown skies,
Unquestioning; to dash, or soon or late,
On sand or cruel crag, as is thy fate.

“Then woe is me!” she said.

Weep not; there is a harder, sadder thing,—
Never to know this sweetest suffering!
Never to see the sun, though suns may slay,
Or share the richer feast as others may.
Sooner the sealed and closely guarded wine
Shall seek again its purple clustered vine,
Sooner the attar be again the rose,
Than Love unlearn the secret that it knows!
Abide thy fate, whether for good or ill;
Fearlessly wait, and be thou certain still,
Whether as foe disguised or friendly guest
He comes, Love’s coming is of all things best.
