POEMS BY AURELIAN

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. T. W.

LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET
1906

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Introduction

In introducing these poems of my late friend I would refer briefly to certain qualities of poetry which are admirably illustrated by the second stanza of Keats' lyric to Sorrow in "Endymion"—

> "Oh, Sorrow,
> Why dost borrow
> The lustrous passion from a falcon eye?
> To give the glow-worm light?
> Or, on a moonless night,
> To tinge by siren shores the salt sea spry?"

These lines are eloquent, with an eloquence unsurpassed in English poetry, of the exquisite suggestiveness and association of poetry. I would haltingly and in plain language explain something of what they mean to me. The apotheosis of sorrow in the first line humanizes the stanza by implication. Here, then, in the first three lines we have a vivid illustration of

the associative power given to the imagination by poetry. By the apotheosis of sorrow; by the metaphorical application to man, the passion of man, fit victim for sorrow; by the thought of the soaring eagle that can gaze with undimmed eyes on the mid-day majesty of the sun—by all these Keats has, with lightest but surest hand, touched the chords of imagination. He has used a dozen words, not to speak to us, but to raise the lid of a mystical box from which are loosed winged spirits of beauty, imagination, and ideality. We are transformed when we read them; they belong to the language of some other world, where the action of the senses is always beautiful and never base. We think of sorrow objectively—of Niobe weeping for her children; of great, brave-hearted men whose ideals soared high above the plains of mankind, careworn and saddened almost to the death by their impotence against the evil of the world; of strong men weeping women's tears at the bedside of a dying child; of the bright, keen