

**SONGS OF CHALLENGE;
AN ANALOGY SELECTED
AND ARRANGED**

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Songs of challenge; an analogy selected and arranged by Robert Frothingham

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ROBERT FROTHINGHAM

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AN ANALOGY SELECTED
AND ARRANGED**

SONGS OF CHALLENGE
An anthology selected and arranged
by **ROBERT FROTHINGHAM**



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TO

ERMAN J. RIDGWAY

"Yet always the aspiring Soul,—
The Angel in the mortal clod,
The Vision that defies control,—
Will look through Nature up to God;
And strive in word and form to speak
The beauty it was born to seek."

FOREWORD

Man has always been at war with himself, and every now and again he awakens to the consciousness that his discontent is divine. Then he turns in weariness from his greatest material accomplishments toward the "Happy Isles" of his imagination. We all have our secret dreams, which generally include a revolt against our own limitations and a longing for better things than those we know.

"Whence" and "Whither" will ever be inseparable phases of the Great Adventure, as the real man views it. And, inasmuch as this compilation is meant for that particular breed, it will be quite apparent to him that there is no intent to "point a moral or adorn a tale," to either affirm or deny, and least of all, to constitute itself a moral or spiritual finger-board.

From the standpoint of the materialist, one of life's tragedies lies in the fact that so many of us know so many things that are n't so. Scarce one of us, however, but recognizes that

"When the fight begins within himself,
A man's worth something."

Pin us down and you'll find that most of us believe in our kinship with the worth-while things, the truly big things, "the stars which fleck our journey's dusks." But it's like squaring the circle when we try to weave that belief into the warp and woof

of our daily grind. The great majority of us are essentially religious — not theologically nor doctrinally, and frequently not even intellectually. But — in the inner recesses of our spirit, where joy works alone, there is a glow like unto the fire of a mountain sunset of which the most wondrous view is to be had from the most distant range: our soul's intimate dream, human nature's Holy of Holies. Here, under an impulse, conscious or unconscious, to be free of laws and restraints, with the thousand and one superfluous precepts of poor, timorous humanity thrown aside, without the necessity for breaking our shins against the Decalogue or rubbing our shoulders raw under the yoke of any particular creed, we kneel to "whatever gods may be" and strive to play the game.

Of all the lessons brought home to us by the World War, this reawakening of our relationship with the Unseen, with its consequent reestablishment of spiritual values is, perhaps, the most significant. We needed to be reminded of the fact that man pays. He has always paid: for being born, for living, for dying. The principal thing that has distinguished us from our early ancestors is that we have been trying to get too much for our money. We have been taking out more than we put in. We invited a crash and we got it. Praises be, however, along with it has come the Vision that is helping a lot of us off the treadmill: the Vision of the Spirit of Song. When a man can sing acceptably about either his belief or his unbelief, whether it agrees with what you and I think or not, we can afford to stop and listen; in fact, we can't afford not to do so.

Some writer has said that human needs are the true ligatures between God and man. How small vanities disappear and how vital stout sincerity becomes in the face of such a belief!

. . .

There are a lot of men who claim to have no liking for poetry, others who read it surreptitiously as though it were forbidden fruit, and still others who profess to regard a love for it as a sort of effeminate dilettantism. The very word "poetry" conveys a wrong meaning to some men. This little book is filled with robust verse, intended to appeal to the very men I have described. If it has any mission at all, it seeks simply to make vivid that Vision which pierces the murk and scatters our up-to-date cocksureness to the four winds, and to restore to hearts grown callous and dour the inspiration and the warmth of the Spirit of Song:

"Beholding dimly from afar the glory of the Hidden
Face --
Our worship ever our reward, the quest our golden
coronal."

R. F.

New York
October, 1922

