

**AN OLD MAN'S
MUSINGS AND
OTHER VERSES**

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An Old Man's Musings and Other Verses by William Hathorn Mills

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WILLIAM HATHORN MILLS

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OTHER VERSES**

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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and
OTHER VERSES

BY
WILLIAM HATHORN MILLS



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MUSINGS

De Senectute

WHAT are the things, the lessons, which old age
Teaches a man, when he has come to it?
Three things, at least; and he need be no sage
To know them; they are learnt by native wit.

First tolerance—tolerance of the infirmities
To which all flesh is heir, of aims and views
Not his, of youth's impetuositities;
For each and all of these he finds excuse.

This tolerance is not careless unconcern,
Not weak assent to things he scorns and hates;
It's patient hope that ignorance may learn;
For better things he works and, hoping, waits.

Next level-mindedness. "Naught in excess"
Is Nature's word to him; he does his best,
Aims at the golden mean, desires success,
But, missing it, is not over-much depressed.

Life, he has seen, has many ups and downs,
But mostly strikes an average on the whole;
And so he sets its smiles against its frowns,
And keeps unswayed the balance of his soul.

Lastly submission to the Eternal Will;
He slighted it, maybe he fought it, when
His life was young within him; now the still
Small Voice speaks to him, and he says Amen.

He knows that death cannot be far away,
Ponders its mystery, and, in the light
Shed on it by the Resurrection Day,
Sees in its witness grace no less than might.

It bids him realize God's omnipotence;
It bids him realize also God's intent
To bring us thro' this world of time and sense
To the eternal world, and bows consent.

Irrequieta Quies

REST is not idleness; there's rest in work,
In quiet industry;
A thousand demons of unrest may lurk
In sloth and lethargy.

Labour there is, of course, whose toil and toil
Makes soul and body faint;
Aye, and there is the work that seeks to foil
The work of seer and saint.

These are not restful labours, nor are these
The work we have to do;
We must be busy as the busy bees,
If peace we would ensue.

Add to such industry the charities,
Which serve our brethren's need;
These crown our work; our very ministries
Bring peace and rest indeed.

The idler is a weary soul, to whom
Rest is a thing unkent;
Satan employs him, and he earns a doom
Of restless discontent.

Aequam Memento

ONCE, fired by thoughts of high success,
I cherished dreams of wealth and fame,
And learnt to know the bitterness
Of disappointed hope and aim.

Now, by a life's experience taught,
I wait to see what time will bring,
Not downcast, but expecting naught
Of any man or any thing.

That's to throw up the game of life;
Yes; but is gaming life's intent,
Life's meaning? Anyhow, rid of strife
And disappointments, I'm content.

I keep my head, or do my best
To keep it; bear what bear I must;
Work as I may; as for the rest—
Well, Providence has the rest in trust.

Keep your mind, said the Roman bard,
Level, or in prosperity,
Or when life's path is steep and hard;
Tough work, but good philosophy!

Straight

If you would hit the waiting nail
Upon the head, and never fail,
Aim straight.

If you would keep your goal in sight,
And, when ways differ, choose the right,
See straight.

If you would win success, that's worth
The name, on this phantasmal earth,
Run straight.

If you would gain the trust and love
Of those with whom you work and move,
Live straight.

If from earth's shadows you would rise
To the clear light of Paradise,
Climb straight.